



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

who really desire work—but still a considerable opening for hardy laborers who are willing to accept the rather low wages and the monotonous conditions of farm labor.

C. C. C.

Report of the Massachusetts Board to Investigate the Subject of the Unemployed. Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., State Printers, 1895. 8vo. pp. lviii+206, xxiii+100, xiii+122, lxiii+24, lxiii+130.

THIS massive document of 802 pages is by far the most thorough work, both descriptive and critical, that has appeared in this country upon the problem of the unemployed, and is in every way distinctly creditable to the members of the board, to its secretary, and others who have co-operated in the investigation. The report consists of five parts, which have been laid before the legislature from time to time, entitled respectively, "Relief Measures," "Wayfarers and Tramps," "Public Works," "Causes," and "Final Report."

The first section is a description of the relief measures adopted in the various cities and towns of the state, to which is added some account of contemporary measures in various cities in this country and Europe. The methods in use in Massachusetts are classified according as they were undertaken by one or another of the following agencies: (1) Special citizens' relief committees, organized primarily to aid the unemployed; (2) municipal departments having charge of public works upon which it was possible to give employment; (3) labor organizations giving aid either by usual out-of-work benefits or by extraordinary methods; (4) private charities, including all permanent relief-giving organizations not connected with the state or municipal government on the one hand, or with labor organizations on the other; (5) the permanently established public relief agencies, administered for the state and for municipalities, such as poor departments. The methods in the various cities are carefully described; and although this portion of the report does not pretend to estimate the value of the various undertakings, there is in the testimony cited and in the incidental comments of the board much material for forming conclusions as to their relative worth.

The account of the Massachusetts experience is supplemented by a statement of certain typical methods in seven of the important cities

in this country. It is perhaps to be regretted that only certain aspects of relief work even in the few cities chosen have been described. A more complete account than has yet been compiled of relief measures throughout the United States, while it would admittedly be somewhat tedious reading, would be of value at any rate in emergencies similar to those of the recent depression. The brief summary of relief measures in Great Britain and in Germany gives recent information not hitherto easily available.

The board was appointed in part through the influence of persons who have sought to bring about within the commonwealth a more rational treatment of the tramp problem, and it is hoped that the labors of the board will accomplish something in this direction. At any rate, not the least valuable portion of its report is that which deals with the treatment of wayfarers and tramps. The statutes should in the judgment of the board be amended to bring about the following results:

1. It should be easier to convict vagrants and tramps.
2. That the overseers of the poor in every town shall provide decent accommodations of food and lodging for wayfarers, and in return therefor shall demand work. Refusal on the part of wayfarers to comply with this demand shall constitute *prima facie* evidence of tramping. No wayfarers shall be lodged in police stations or in tramp rooms connected with such stations; these stations shall be reserved solely for those under criminal charge or sentence. Failure on the part of overseers of the poor to demand work shall be subject to penalties.
3. All persons found riding on freight trains without authorized permission should be punished with the penalties against tramps.
4. Tramps shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison, state reformatory, state farm, or house of correction, for not less than one year or more than three years.

It is further recommended by the board—and this is the more radical recommendation—that the state establish an industrial and agricultural colony to which tramps and vagabonds under thirty years of age shall be committed, and to which any male person under that age shall, under suitable conditions, be allowed to betake himself.

The third installment of the report deals with employment upon public works, as related to the problem in hand. Some of the conclusions of the board, based upon the recent experience of Massachusetts cities and upon a great deal of expert testimony, may here be summarized. As a rule the municipality does not do construction work as cheaply as can a contractor to whom the work is entrusted, but the

direct municipal work is generally better in quality. Cities in letting contracts should guard against the introduction of bodies of non-residents, and particularly of alien laborers, and in periods of distress they should, moreover, give the preference to home producers of the materials used. A better distribution of the work by seasons might in many cases be made.

A valuable discussion of the amount and causes of non-employment forms the fourth section of the volume before us. As against the somewhat optimistic opinion so often expressed that there is in this country no problem of the unemployed except in times of extraordinary depression, the board rightly asserts that the problem "must be looked upon as a more or less permanent one," to be "attacked, if attacked at all, by slow and patient methods;" that "even in so-called normal times there is an amount of non-employment which occasions suffering." Indeed, if one is interested in seeing how serious the problem was even in the earlier half of the century he may be referred to the extracts cited in the report from newspapers in the years from 1835 to 1860—a collection of evidence as to the antiquity of this "new" problem which might easily be considerably further extended. As regards recent conditions, the report supplements such statistical material as is available with a detailed study of the conditions existing—not only as regards irregularity of employment, but also as concerns wages, stress of work, the character of laborers, etc.,—in eight of the principal industries of the state.

The "Final Report" gives the matured conclusions of the board first as to various methods of emergency relief, and secondly as to permanent measures actual and proposed. Not a great deal can, in the judgment of the board, be expected from the Public Poor Departments in the emergency relief of the *bona fide* workers thrown out of employment; the financial conditions of the municipalities and the difficulties of undertaking new enterprises without long preparation or at unfavorable seasons of the year seem to preclude relief by Public Works Departments to about the limits which it reached during the late depression; labor organizations which have certain peculiar advantages as relief agencies are cramped by lack of adequate funds; Special Relief Committees lack the adequate experience, machinery and trained staff; Private Charities, however well prepared to deal with the degraded and chronically unfortunate, often lack "a certain sort of tact and generous discrimination which is needed in dealing

with men and women who, under ordinary conditions, are steady wage-earners," and have largely lost the confidence of the laboring people. In view of these inadequacies of existing agencies, the board suggests "as a desirable plan to be worked for, not only for the permanent relief of chronic distress, but also for the temporary relief of those practically stranded because of non-employment," the following scheme :

1. An organization shall be formed, known as the Central Labor and Relief Agency, with branches in several districts or wards of the city or town. If practicable, the organization known as the Associated Charities (Charity Organization Society) might be developed along this line.

2. The administration of this society shall include: (a) workingmen familiar with the conditions of unskilled and skilled labor; (b) charity experts. This shall apply not only to the administration of the parent society but also to that of every branch.

3. This society shall establish various work-tests of a simple, and, as far as possible, educational character, and local in their application. It is not intended that every one shall be submitted to the test. The test is designed (a) to prevent imposition; (b) to serve as an additional measure for the better training of incompetent persons.

4. In times of emergency, if special measures appear necessary the public should be appealed to for funds, either directly, or, if the charter of the society forbids, through an organization practically identical in the personal elements represented, and which will be able to use the machinery of the Labor and Relief Agency.

5. If there were exceptional distress in certain trades, it would be proper for this society to appropriate and hand over portions of its funds directly to the officers of the workingmen's societies. The expenditure of this appropriation should be reported upon and audited by the Central Labor and Relief Agency or its temporary substitute.

6. Work-tests designed more particularly for the unskilled and incompetent, being local and varied in character, could, at times of emergency, be extended without difficulty, according to special and individual needs, with freer opportunities for classification of those relieved.

Under the head of permanent measures (to which the above project also in certain of its aspects obviously belongs) are discussed a variety of proposals for the relief of the overstocked labor market. The board looks with some confidence upon the plan of placing certain classes of urban labor upon farms or farm colonies; and cites among other evidence the experience of the colony at Alliance, N. J., established in 1882 by the Hebrew Aid Society of New York, and of

another established at Woodbine, N. J., in 1891 by means of funds subscribed by Baron de Hirsch, the results of the farm colonization of Swedes in Maine in 1870, and the success attained in the colony of Victoria under the act passed August 31, 1893, "to provide for the establishment of village communities, homestead associations and labor colonies." While recognizing that Convict Labor should be in some way controlled to prevent the present considerable injury to free labor, the board is not prepared to advocate any specific measures to this end. With reference to the proposal for an Eight-Hour Day, the board holds very rightly that this movement is to be judged on grounds apart from its relation to the demand for labor.

More positive recommendations are made with reference to two other proposed means of diminishing the difficulties of non-employment. One remedy is a better system of employment agencies. While not regarding public employment bureaus as advisable, except in times of emergency, the board recommends that the Bureau of Statistics of Labor, through special agencies in different parts of the state, collect and regularly publish information in regard to industrial conditions, thus establishing a sort of clearing house of the demands of labor.

A more fundamental remedy in that it would do more to remove the causes of non-employment is the extension of industrial and also of agricultural education. This is one of the few recommendations that is made without hesitation and qualification. "We have been repeatedly told in the course of our inquiry that there is an unsatisfied demand for better-skilled workmen, while at the same time the lower grades are overcrowded. . . . For this reason we earnestly advocate the rapid extension of industrial education in the lower grades of the public schools. . . . A considerable number of the unemployed in our large cities are those who have come from the country into the city unprepared for the stress of severe competition which is to be met in city life, and have thus become stranded in the large centers of population. It is highly desirable that this tendency of immigration on the part of those ill-fitted for city life should be stopped as far as possible. We believe that this can be done in a considerable measure by adapting the education of children in agricultural districts more closely to farm life and farm work, so that they can enter upon such pursuits with more interest and with greater prospect of success."

Finally, upon the necessity of the restriction of immigration the board speaks with no uncertain sound :

It appears to us that the evil of non-employment is in a considerable measure due to ill-responsible, ill-advised and ill-adapted immigration. It is found that not only in Boston, but in many of the cities of similar rank in the United States, a large proportion of those who needed help during the emergency of last winter were immigrants who had recently arrived. It is impossible to introduce any plan of positive and immediate aid for the unemployed of this country that does not mean doing the same for the unemployed of Europe. Under present conditions, the United States is attempting to solve the question of non-employment for Europe as well as for itself. . . . Much of recent immigration is due to depressed and abnormal conditions abroad, to governmental persecutions, and to irresponsible and inaccurate representations in Europe of industrial conditions in this country.

A large part of this recent emigration, moreover, remains in the eastern cities, unable through lack of means to go to the West or South, where there may possibly be a greater demand for such labor [Is there a legitimate demand for more of such inferior population anywhere in this country], or is unfitted for the agricultural life which might otherwise absorb it.

A large number of these immigrants also are illiterate, and consequently cannot rise into the ranks of skilled labor. They have become congested in our large cities, and not only find themselves repeatedly in need of relief, but also depriving the rank and file of our more permanently established industrial classes of opportunities of working at unskilled employments when there is a temporary interruption in skilled occupations.

These words are none too strong and they point to one aspect of the problem of which the phenomenon of non-employment is only a symptom. The fundamental difficulty is the low industrial efficiency of a large portion of the population, the presence in the community of a mass of low vitality, slight capacity, and slighter adaptability. Industrial education (though we are disposed to rely too optimistically upon the extent to which it can change ingrained character), the dispersion of the congested population of the cities, more judicious methods of dealing with the unemployed, will do something to relieve the difficulties of the situation. But they do not touch deeply the real problem, with which any constructive social policy will have to reckon—the improvement of the quality of the population. The control of immigration is indeed the first step—but it is only the first step—toward the solution of this problem.

C. C. C.